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22 February-3 March 1993
Item 16 of the provisional agenda*

PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE TWENTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION

Note by the Secretariat

1. The Economic and Social Council, in resolution 1894 (LVII), requested the Secretary-General to submit, at each session of a functional commission or subsidiary body of the Council, a draft provisional agenda for its following session and to indicate the documents to be submitted under each agenda item and the legislative authority for their preparation.

2. In resolution 1979/41, the Council decided that the provisional agenda for its subsidiary bodies, together with the list of requested documentation, should be submitted to the Council for its review, in order, inter alia, to establish greater consistency between the documentation of those bodies and the overall documentation requested by the Council and other subsidiary bodies and greater consistency between the requests for documentation and the medium-term plan and the programme budget.

3. In resolution 1982/50 on the revitalization of its work, the Council endorsed the recommendation of the Secretary-General that the documentation and programme of work of the subsidiary bodies of the Council should also be streamlined in order to enable them to perform effectively the functions entrusted to them.

4. The draft provisional agenda for the twenty-eighth session of the Statistical Commission will be completed at the present session in the light of resolutions and decisions adopted and requests made by the Commission

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* E/CN.3/1993/1.

during the present session and will be submitted to the Council for review, in accordance with Council resolution 1979/41. The following draft provisional agenda has been prepared on the basis of existing legislative authority:

1. Election of officers.

2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.

3. Special topic (see para. 5 below):

   (a) Statistical education and training (E/CN.3/1993/2, para. 47);

   Documentation

   Report by Statistics Canada

   (b) National and international statistical issues resulting from the emergence of customs and economic unions (E/CN.3/1993/2, para. 47);

   (c) Advantages and disadvantages of more flexible standards (classifications and other elements), concentrating in the first instance on classifications for economic activities and commodities (E/CN.3/1993/21, annex II, para. 59).

4. National accounts:

   Implementation of the revised System of National Accounts (SNA) (in the expectation that the revised SNA will be adopted at the present session) (E/CN.3/1993/21, para. 9, E/1991/25, paras. 38 (i) and (j) and 50 (e)).

   Documentation

   Report on strategies, progress and problems in implementation of the revised SNA

5. Industrial statistics.

   Documentation

   Report on industrial statistics including needs for current industrial statistics (E/CN.3/1993/2, para. 58)

6. Monitoring adherence to adopted United Nations classifications.

Documentation

Report on the present situation regarding the adoption of classifications in countries and their relationship to adopted United Nations classifications (E/CN.3/1993/21, annex II, para. 57)

7. Coordination and integration of international statistical programmes.

Documentation

Report of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination on its sixteenth session (E/CN.3/1993/21, para. 13)

Report on coordination of data collection from countries (E/CN.3/1993/21, annex II, para. 61)

8. Programme questions.

Documentation

Draft work programme of the Statistical Office for 1996-1997, proposals for the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2003 and information on programme performance during 1992-1993 and part of 1994

9. Draft provisional agenda for the twenty-ninth session of the Commission.

10. Report of the Commission on its twenty-eighth session.

5. The Commission, at its twenty-sixth session, decided that a maximum of one special topic should be included in the agenda of the twenty-seventh session. 1/ It is the Secretariat's view that a maximum of one topic should be selected for special discussion at the twenty-eighth session, bearing in mind resource constraints on the preparation of documentation for the Commission. The Commission may wish to request the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination to select a topic in the light of the Commission's discussion at the present session.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1991, Supplement No. 5 (E/1991/25), para. 244.

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REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON ITS TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION

Draft report

Rapporteur: Jothan Antony MWANIKI (Kenya)

Chapter ___. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

A. Opening and duration of the session

The Statistical Commission held its twenty-seventh session at United Nations Headquarters from 22 February to 3 March 1993. The Commission held ___ meetings (451st to _____).

The session was opened by the temporary Chairman, Mr. W. Begeer (Netherlands).

B. Attendance

The session was attended by all 24 States members of the Commission. Observers for other States Members of the United Nations and for a non-member State, representatives of the Secretariat, United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, and observers for intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations also attended. A list of participants is given in annex I to the report.

C. Election of officers

At its 451st meeting, on 22 February 1993, the Commission elected the following officers by acclamation:

Chairman: W. Begeer (Netherlands)

Vice-Chairmen: Miguel Cervera Flores (Mexico)
Hiroyasu Kudo (Japan)
Jozef Olenski (Poland)

Rapporteur: Jothan Antony Mwaniki (Kenya)

D. Agenda and organization of work

At its 451st meeting, on 22 February 1993, the Commission adopted the provisional agenda contained in document E/CN.3/1993/1, as orally amended (see annex II to the report).

At the same meeting, the Commission approved its organization of work as set out in document E/CN.3/1993/L.2, as orally amended.

E. Documentation

The documents before the Commission at its twenty-seventh session are listed in annex III to the report.

Chapter ___. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSION

At its _____ meeting, on _____ February 1991, the Commission adopted the draft report on its twenty-seventh session (E/CN.3/1993/L.4 and Add.1-___), as amended during the discussion.

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REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON ITS TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION

Draft report

Addendum

Rapporteur: J. A. MWANIKI (Kenya)

Chapter _. NATIONAL ACCOUNTS AND BALANCES

System of National Accounts (SNA)

1. The Commission considered item 4 (a) of its agenda at its 453rd and 454th meetings, on 23 February 1993. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts on the revision of the System of National Accounts (E/CN.3/1993/4 and Add.1 and 2);

(b) Note by the International Labour Office concerning statistics of employment in the informal sector (E/CN.3/1993/5);

(c) Report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts on implementation of the revised System of National Accounts (E/CN.3/1993/6);

(d) Draft of the revised System of National Accounts (PROVISIONAL ST/ESA/SER.F/2/Rev.4).

The report of the Interregional Seminar on the Revision of the System of National Accounts, held in Aguascalientes, Mexico, in October 1992 (ESA/STAT/AC.43/8) was made available to the Commission as a background document.

2. Ms. Carol Carson, on behalf of the member organizations of the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts (ISWGNA) (the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat, the United Nations regional commissions, the International Monetary Fund, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, the Statistical Office of the European Communities, and the World Bank), made an oral presentation to introduce the SNA documents for discussion.

3. The following eight major substantive issues addressed by ISWGNA in its report (E/CN.3/1993/4/Add.1) were brought to the attention of the Commission: financial intermediation service charges indirectly measured; imputed rent on government buildings; monetary gold; market/non-market output; mineral exploration; consumer subsidies; formal/informal; and environmental accounting.

4. The Commission noted the substantial effort made to have the final draft of the SNA before it, as it had requested at its twenty-sixth session. It also noted that ISWGNA had continued the broad consultative process in all regions of the world. That process was the hallmark of the revision procedure and had resulted in a revised SNA that was considered to be a vast improvement over its predecessor, the 1968 SNA. The Commission also noted that, at the outset of the revision, the goals had been to clarify and simplify the 1968 SNA, update it and harmonize it more closely with other sets of statistical standards. The revised SNA represented a considerable achievement in meeting each of those goals.

5. The Commission expressed its deep appreciation to ISWGNA for its coordinating efforts and for the substantial resources provided by its participating organizations in carrying out the technical aspects of the work. It expressed its thanks to Mr. Peter Hill and Mr. André Vanoli, who were the primary consultants, and to Ms. Carol Carson, who provided management support to ISWGNA. It recognized that national statistical offices had made substantial contributions to the revision process both in cash and in kind (e.g., in preparing drafts and translations), by hosting meetings (since the twenty-sixth session of the Commission, meetings had been held in Zimbabwe and Mexico) and by making their experts available for participation in the revision process, and expressed its thanks to them for those contributions. In all, about 50 experts in national accounting and other fields, from about 40 countries, had participated in the revision process, and the Commission recognized the contributions they had made. It also expressed its thanks to the International Association for Research in Income and Wealth for its assistance with administrative matters, and to several international organizations that maintained statistical systems for their collaborative efforts.

6. The draft of the revised System of National Accounts (PROVISIONAL ST/ESA/STAT/SER.F/2/Rev.4) was welcomed unanimously as a major achievement and the culmination of 10 years of effort to improve the basis of national accounts, to extend the scope of the national accounting framework, and to harmonize different statistical systems. The System being presented was flexible enough to be applied in different circumstances and to be extended to alternative analyses such as social accounting matrices and environmental accounting. The readability of the draft was praised.

7. It was also noted that, in such a vast undertaking, it was impossible to satisfy the preferred positions of all countries on all subjects. Nevertheless, it was felt that a satisfactory balance had emerged and that the draft adequately represented a general consensus on most issues. In that context, the high degree of harmonization with the fifth edition of the Balance of Payments Manual of the International Monetary Fund was welcomed. There were a number of areas in which some reservations were expressed, but not insisted upon:

(a) Several representatives expressed regret that all research and development expenditure continued to be treated as current expenditure. It was noted that, in contrast, all mineral exploration expenditure was treated as capital expenditure;

(b) Two representatives expressed regret that the concept of financial gold had been dropped from the System;

(c) Several representatives expressed regret that the earlier decision to include imputed rent for buildings owned and occupied by Governments and non-profit institutions serving households had been reversed;

(d) One representative suggested that the proposal to treat military durables other than offensive weapons as fixed capital should be accompanied by treatment of armaments as inventories, rather than current expenditure;

(e) Several representatives felt that more precision was needed concerning the construction of production accounts for households;

(f) Another representative felt that the distinction between actual final consumption and final consumption expenditure unnecessarily complicated the sequence of accounts;

(g) Certain representatives expressed regret that no final solution had been found for the identification and treatment of consumer subsidies.

8. Several representatives mentioned the importance and difficulty of measuring the informal sector. The representative of ILO reported orally on the results of the discussion at the Fifteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS). Reference should be made in the chapter on institutional units and sectors to the work being done by ICLS on developing standards for the informal sector.

9. The Commission addressed in detail the problem of financial intermediation service charges indirectly measured. While most representatives recognized that it was desirable in principle to allocate those charges fully, several expressed the view that there were many practical difficulties that had not yet been resolved. They also regretted that the treatment of those charges in the SNA gave rise to an inconsistency with the Balance of Payments Manual of the International Monetary Fund and could likewise be inconsistent with the European System of Integrated Economic Accounts (ESA) being developed by EUROSTAT. Other representatives agreed with the treatment in the existing text, citing their own experience in allocating financial intermediation charges and new approaches that they were considering.

10. In order to address the views of those who had expressed difficulties in implementing the proposed treatment, ISWGNA proposed a flexible treatment that recognized the desirability of allocating the charges fully while allowing sufficient flexibility in implementation to reflect the current circumstances in particular countries or groups of countries. The ISWGNA proposal was accepted unanimously by the Commission. The proposal consisted of five elements:

(1) Accept the present statement in the text that "In principle, the total output should be allocated among users for which no explicit charge is made";

(2) Permit those countries or groups of countries that cannot at present allocate these charges explicitly to specific users to allocate them all to intermediate use (the 1968 SNA de facto solution);

(3) Permit those countries or groups of countries that can allocate charges to both intermediate and final use to do so;

(4) Request those countries that allocate charges entirely to intermediate consumption to prepare, as soon as they can, supplementary estimates showing an explicit allocation to specific users and the effect this has on gross domestic product (GDP), gross national income (GNI), and other relevant aggregates;

(5) Request those countries that allocate charges to both intermediate and final use to identify those allocations separately.

11. The information provided in the last two elements of the proposal would facilitate international comparisons on either basis.

12. In addition, it was suggested that the Statistical Commission should request ISWGNA to place the highest priority on developing in the near future practical guidelines for explicit allocation of financial intermediation service charges to specific users. The work should draw on the experiences of those countries currently implementing, or about to implement, a system of full allocation in order to review their procedures; it should also draw on the work being carried out in those countries that had indicated major impediments to full allocation.

Action taken by the Commission

13. The Commission:

(a) Unanimously recommended the adoption of the draft of the revised System of National Accounts, 1993, subject to the amendments recommended by ISWGNA in E/CN.3/1993/4/Add.1 and . ISWGNA was urged:

(i) To ensure publication of the 1993 SNA in English before the end of 1993;

(ii) To expedite the publication of other language versions as soon as possible thereafter, noting that considerable revision to the current drafts was necessary to ensure the use of idiomatic language and correct technical terms;

(b) Agreed, in line with common practice in the adoption of other international recommendations by the Commission, that the decisions of the Commission and the substance of its report would also be reflected in the front matter of the 1993 SNA when it was published.

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REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON ITS TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION

Draft report

Addendum

Rapporteur: J. A. MWANIKI (Kenya)

Chapter _. NATIONAL ACCOUNTS AND BALANCES

Implementation of the System of National Accounts (SNA)

1. The Commission considered item 4 (b) of its agenda at its 454th and 455th meetings, on 23 and 24 February 1993. It had before it a report prepared by the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on National Accounts (ISWGNA) on implementation of the revised System of National Accounts (E/CN.3/1993/6).

2. The report outlined four areas where a coordinated international effort was critical: basic data development; handbooks, guidelines, manuals and special studies; training; and technical cooperation/assistance. ISWGNA identified a range of activities carrying forward a research agenda that would avoid lengthy delays in making major innovations in national accounts. ISWGNA also made suggestions about future work, for which resources had not yet been committed. With respect to publication of the revised SNA, ISWGNA was planning to publish the English version in 1993, with work to go forward on the other language versions as soon as the English manuscript including all changes, was available for translation - targetted at the end of June 1993. With respect to implementation, ISWGNA suggested a continuing role. It could possibly identify topics for research, seeking assistance for national

statistical offices in bearing the burden of preparing handbooks and compilation guides, and promoting the preparation of manuals in other fields that harmonize with SNA. It also suggested that it could serve as a coordinating body for, and could play a catalytic role with respect to, technical assistance/cooperation and training.

3. Constrained by the limited resources available at the current time, the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat and the regional commissions, in close cooperation, outlined plans to assist countries in the implementation of the revised SNA by training trainers and the national accounts staff of national statistical offices, through seminars and country workshops, handbooks, the compilation of software and methodology and other training materials. In the first years, efforts were likely to be concentrated on the preparation of handbooks and training materials, identification of the basic statistics needed, and pilot implementation projects in a limited number of countries. The projects constituted a combination of efforts under way in a limited number of countries and drew on experience already acquired. It was envisaged that, provided new resources became available, a much more widespread programme of assistance to countries would develop, based in part on regional and subregional priorities expressed at regional forums.

4. The International Monetary Fund confirmed its active support for all four types of activities to support implementation of the revised SNA. In particular, the fifth edition of the Balance of Payments Manual and a companion volume, a compilation guide, would be published in early 1993. Work had started on a new manual on financial statistics; a complete draft was expected by the end of 1994. During 1993 work would start on revisions to the Manual on Government Finance Statistics, with a new draft expected about the end of 1995. The Fund expected to continue its extensive technical assistance programme in the areas of balance of payments and financial and government statistics, and would, on request, provide specific technical assistance in national accounts to members.

5. The World Bank welcomed the emphasis placed on rapid implementation of the newly adopted SNA. It would continue to play a role in ISWGNA and work in a coordinated manner with the other agencies, so as to avoid duplicating efforts. Owing to its intimate contact with national statistical agencies, the Bank was of the view that implementation of the revised SNA in many of the developing and transition countries would depend on rapid development of basic economic statistics. Therefore, concerted efforts to build statistical capacities were an essential first step. The Bank endorsed the need for handbooks and manuals but stressed that they should have a practical orientation. Research into outstanding and emerging issues under the auspices of ISWGNA would require the support of national offices. The Bank would continue to entertain and consider requests for technical assistance, through loans and credits, on a case-by-case basis.

6. OECD had already begun to collect material on the plans to implement the revised SNA in its member countries. The material would be presented at the

National Accounts Working Group, to be held in June 1993 in cooperation with ECE. As focal point for the implementation of the revised SNA in countries of the former Soviet Union, OECD had an extensive programme of technical assistance in national accounts for countries of Central and Eastern Europe and of the former Soviet Union which was already based on the revised SNA. Representatives of those countries would be invited to OECD meetings on national accounts and to special workshops and seminars.

7. EUROSTAT was working to develop a new version of the European System of Integrated Economic Accounts (ESA) which would be entirely consistent with the revised SNA and should be complete about mid-1994. Training in national accounts was provided to countries of the European Economic Area and Central and Eastern Europe under a special training programme. A similar programme was being developed for the countries of the former Soviet Union, in close cooperation with OECD. Special assistance would also be offered to countries in the African, Caribbean and Pacific regions, under the terms of Lomé IV, and would involve training centres in both Europe and Africa.

8. Members of the Commission welcomed the suggestions made by ISWGNA regarding its future role. The Commission emphasized the urgent need for adequate handbooks and compilation guides. Those being prepared for countries in transition and dealing with conditions of high inflation were eagerly awaited. Several members mentioned plans to prepare national documentation which could be made generally available. Training and technical assistance were also stressed, and some members offered assistance in that area also.

9. Some members noted that, in general, plans and resources for assistance in the implementation of the revised SNA were already available for countries in the European region, although there was still a lack of clearly identified plans and resources for assistance for developing countries.

10. The Commission endorsed the intention to pursue research into the unresolved issues and to work on future aspects of the accounts - for example, environmental accounting and coverage of the informal sector. However, members cautioned that the research agenda should not be over-long or over-ambitious.

Action taken by the Commission

11. The Commission:

(a) Acknowledged that ISWGNA had proved a very effective mechanism for overseeing the revision process and developing the 1993 SNA, and expressed the wish that ISWGNA would continue to operate and would assume the responsibility for coordinating all aspects of the implementation programme. All the organizations concerned confirmed their continuing commitment to ISWGNA;

(b) Agreed that it would be desirable for the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination, to be kept informed, through its Chairman, of actions scheduled by members of ISWGNA;

(c) Welcomed the offers of several member States and regional and international organizations to cooperate and assist in all aspects of the implementation of the revised SNA, as an important part of their work programmes;

(d) Agreed that the regional commissions of the United Nations should play a major role in the implementation of the new SNA in their respective regions and urged the Secretary-General of the United Nations to coordinate at a high level the mobilization of both bilateral and multilateral resources for that purpose.

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REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON ITS TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION

Draft report

Addendum

Rapporteur: J. A. MWANIKI (Kenya)

Chapter___. TECHNICAL COOPERATION

National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP), Social Dimensions of Adjustment (SDA) Programme and the Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS)

1. The Commission considered item 13 (b) and (c) of its agenda at its 458th meeting, on 25 February 1993. It had before it two joint reports of the Secretary-General and the World Bank, one reviewing progress in the implementation of the National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP), the Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS) and the Social Dimensions of Adjustment Programme (SDA) (E/CN.3/1993/18), and the other detailing selected issues between the NHSCP and LSMS/SDA (E/CN.3/1993/19).

2. The Commission welcomed the joint report on selected issues and expressed its satisfaction that its appeals at its twenty-sixth session for the programmes of NHSCP and SDA/LSMS to work in closer coordination and cooperation had been heeded. It noted that the most effective cooperation was at the country level, though it should be more systematized and was pleased to cite the example of Mali (E/CN.3/1993/19, annex). It also noted that coordination at the country level had to be supplemented by coordination at the programme level, which it was pleased to see had been effective, particularly with respect to development of technical materials.

3. The Commission found the progress report to be a helpful review, noting that the three programmes underlined the capability of household surveys in many countries, despite difficulties encountered in their implementation.

4. The Commission stated that institution-building at the country level was a critical component in the development and application of household survey methodology and urged that, with regard to Africa, the future strategy for development of household surveys should be promoted within the context of the Strategy for the Implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s (E/ECA/CM.18/10/Add.1).

5. The Commission urged that future initiatives with respect to NHSCP and SDA/LSMS should emphasize the policy relevance of surveys, noting that for decision makers the construction of such useful products as poverty profiles was invaluable and should be continued and expanded. Several examples of how the survey data were being used for policy design purposes were cited, but the view was also expressed that much fuller use could still be made of them and that further efforts were needed to promote such usage. It was urged that more work be done to develop "light" surveys or those with quick turnaround.

6. The Commission recognized that many of the differences in approach, methodology and objectives between the NHSCP and LSMS/SDA were unavoidable, but those differences should not inhibit the agencies from working closely together, especially at the country level. It was noted that, with respect to data requirements, the SDA programme was more ambitious than NHSCP in terms of its requirements for timeliness but that SDA drew upon the experience of NHSCP in developing countries where the latter has been instrumental in establishing household survey capability.

7. Some of the methodological differences between NHSCP and SDA, such as the use or lack of master samples, were noted, but again it was agreed that those differences correctly reflected the objectives of the survey within a particular country and should not be seen as competing methodological strategies.

8. Some members pointed out that the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers at its seventh session, in March 1992, had endorsed the African Household Survey Capability Programme (AHSCP), the regional component of NHSCP, as one of the most useful programmes of the African region. The uniqueness of NHSCP as an "umbrella" programme was also noted, since it drew the best out of all components of the United Nations system - i.e., the regional commissions, the specialized agencies and the United Nations Secretariat - through its networking arrangements of coordination. It was urged that the core components of NHSCP be institutionalized within the context of the regular programmes of technical cooperation of the United Nations system.

9. The Commission noted that the experiences of African countries in implementing poverty monitoring systems using the household survey programmes could be of relevance and interest to countries elsewhere experiencing similar rapid social and economic change.

10. At the regional level, the Commission was informed of much progress with respect to the implementation of continuing household surveys, including training in methodology, in several countries of ECLAC and ECA and also with respect to the utilization of results such as social indicators on the poverty situation of those countries.

Action taken by the Commission

The Commission:

(a) Expressed its appreciation of the improved spirit of cooperation between the NHSCP, LSMS and SDA programmes;

(b) Supported the importance of promoting such cooperation at the country level first and foremost, while at the same time extending such cooperation up to the programme level;

(c) Recognized that the policy-relevance of the surveys was very important and that continued efforts were needed to promote full use of the survey results;

(d) Agreed that methodological differences were unavoidable but should not be a barrier to cooperation;

(e) Encouraged countries implementing poverty-monitoring based on household surveys to share their experiences with other countries not participating in the NHSCP, LSMS or SDA;

(f) Urged that the core components of the NHSCP be institutionalized within the context of regular programmes of technical cooperation of the United Nations system.

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Draft report

Addendum

Rapporteur: J. A. MWANIKI (Kenya)

Chapter ___. STRENGTHENING INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL COOPERATION

1. The Commission considered item 3 of its agenda at its 452nd, 455th and 456th meetings, on 22 and 24 February 1993. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination on its fourteenth session (E/CN.3/1993/2);

(b) Report of the Secretary-General containing comments on the recommendations and decisions contained in the report of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination on its fifteenth session, work done and additional action required for implementation (E/CN.3/1993/3 and Add.1);

(c) Report of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination on its fifteenth session (E/CN.3/1993/21);

(d) Report of the Secretary-General on the proposed programme of work of the Statistical Division for the biennium 1994-1995 and revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 (E/CN.3/1993/25);

(e) Note by the Secretariat containing the proposed programme of work of the Statistical Division for 1994-1995 and related information (E/CN.3/1993/CRP.1);

(f) Programme 24 (Statistics) of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 (A/45/6/Rev.1);

(g) Revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997, programme 24 (Statistics) (A/47/6/(Prog. 24)).

2. The Commission expressed its thanks to the independent Review Group, the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination and the international organizations for the work which had resulted in the decisions and recommendations set out in the Working Group's report on its fifteenth session (E/CN.3/1993/21, annex II). The Commission noted that that process had fulfilled a large number of the expectations resulting from the discussion of the matter at the twenty-sixth session of the Commission.

3. During a wide-ranging general discussion, the Commission was of the opinion that the global statistical system could best be defined in terms of the units or elements that comprised it and the various interrelationships among them. In such a system, there would be no single hierarchy of units or entities. The Commission identified the following elements as described by the Working Group: the Statistical Commission, its Working Group, the regional intergovernmental statistical bodies, the national statistical offices, the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat, the statistical services of the specialized agencies of the United Nations system and other international organizations and bodies such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, and the Statistical Office of the European Communities, the statistical services of other parts of the United Nations Secretariat, including the United Nations regional commissions and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. The Working Group recognized that there well might be other units in the system as well (E/CN.3/1993/21, para. 76). The Commission confirmed that it was essential that the System focus its efforts, in a revitalized framework of cooperation, towards overall statistical development, under the direction of a strengthened Statistical Commission and Working Group, and with an enhanced regional dimension. This would promote more efficient use of the limited resources available for statistical work at the national and international levels. The Commission noted that concrete results had already been achieved, and that enhanced cooperative attitudes and arrangements had developed in the international organizations. The Commission called for the recommendations and decisions contained in the report of the Working Group to be implemented as soon as possible.

4. The Commission considered that development of international statistical arrangements must be inclusive, giving all countries the opportunity to participate fully, and must recognize differences in statistical capacities among countries. Participation in the work of the Commission and its Working Group provided such an opportunity. The Commission agreed that an enhanced regional dimension in the System, with well functioning links with the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat (UNSTAT) and other international organizations was called for. In particular, this would involve the recognition and strengthening of the role of regional statistical conferences and the regional statistical divisions, and would be particularly appropriate given the increasing regionalization of economic activities. It would also promote country participation in the System, additional cooperation

and strengthening of the national and regional elements of the international system.

5. The Commission considered that, in looking at the System, it was important to determine the overall tasks of the System, identify the organizations involved and their relative skills and capacities, promote allocation of tasks, both functionally and geographically consistent with those characteristics, establish a time-frame for action and a system for monitoring and reporting progress. This would represent a pragmatic short-term approach to helping the System become more efficient. In the longer term, a rethinking of the overall organizational arrangement of the System and its elements might be attempted. A number of elements for alternative approaches to organizational structure and operational methods were suggested, including simplifying the structures and the overall System and expanding the use of flexible and pragmatic decisions aimed at reducing duplication of work. In any approach to improving the operation of the System, the autonomous nature of the international agencies with their own governing bodies was recognized by the Commission.

6. The Commission agreed that it needed better information on what the System was doing and on the collective priorities of the System, in order to carry out its overall responsibilities more effectively. It decided that an integrated report on the statistical programmes of the organizations involved, broadening the reports currently compiled by UNSTAT in cooperation with the agencies, would attempt to fill the information gap. The Commission also decided that it was important to address the substance of what was being done by the System. The sectoral approach adopted and the task forces established by the Working Group were supported. The Commission noted that duplication could be assessed within regions by a review of work plans of the regional organizations, using recent developments in the European region as a model.

7. The Commission agreed that a number of tools, when further developed, would facilitate its task, namely a classification system to permit a clearer presentation of the activities of the System by subject and up-to-date directories and inventories describing those activities. Through such tools, the combined activities of all the organizations would become more apparent to the Commission and the organizations themselves, especially overlaps and gaps in activities. Examples of these tools, already at various stages of development by UNSTAT and the agencies, included the reports on integrated performance and plans before the Commission (E/CN.3/1993/22 and E/CN.3/1993/23), the Directory of International Statistics which, although it required updating, contained a useful initial classification of statistical subject-matters, and the inventory of statistical data collection activities (E/CN.3/AC.1/1991/R.7).

8. Several additional points related to overall statistical development and cooperation were made. For example, (a) a core framework of standards was needed but with provision for flexible implementation; (b) greater assistance was needed in the implementation of United Nations standards in developing countries and the countries in transition; (c) publications and other forms of dissemination should be reviewed, in particular to identify and avoid duplication of collection of data; and (d) expanded cooperation between UNSTAT and regional statistical bodies was desirable.

9. The Commission took note of planned activities of the International Statistical Institute that were considered relevant to long-term statistical organization.

10. The Commission reviewed the recommendations and decisions of the Working Group as set out in annex II of the report on its fifteenth session (E/CN.3/1993/21). The comments, agreements, reservations and clarifications of the Commission are set out below (see paras. 27-45 for the texts of the recommendations and decisions).

Recommendation 1

11. The Commission broadly supported the recommendation that the Commission should meet more frequently if necessary. It would therefore be able to exercise better its leadership responsibilities in providing guidance and evaluation of international statistical work in the face of rapid change affecting statistical matters and would provide for continuity of participation by members. The Commission recognized that its influence was achieved through moral suasion and that more frequent meetings would allow this form of leadership to be more effective. Some representatives considered that an annual schedule should be adopted; others considered that annual meetings were not necessary but that they would be recommended as the specific need arose. That need could be established by reviewing the problems to be addressed and developing a programme of action. There was a general consensus that an annual meeting should be shorter than a biennial one and that alternative kinds of agendas and documentation, and procedural changes in the conduct of sessions would enable the Commission to be more focused on a limited number of broad strategic priority issues. The Commission recognized that annual meetings would have cost implications for international organizations and national statistical offices. The point was made, however, that the additional costs could be outweighed by the savings from reduced duplication. It was recognized that more frequent Commission sessions (and Working Group sessions if that were decided upon also) would need to be considered in the context of the overall schedule of international statistical meetings.

12. The Commission recognized that the objectives of providing leadership and continuity could also be served by more extensive communication through electronic media, and noted that international organizations were applying such forms of communication to facilitate cooperation. The Commission agreed that by giving an expanded role to a strengthened Working Group, meeting annually, with an enhanced regional involvement, more continuous leadership could be provided to the System.

Recommendation 2

13. The Commission noted that there might be technical difficulties in implementing some aspects of this recommendation and requested the Working Group to address possible difficulties to allow the fullest implementation. In particular, difficulties in nominating officers for the forthcoming session at the end of a current session were recognized.

Recommendation 3

14. The Commission stressed that the Working Group should meet more frequently as a basic element of its functioning and that of the Commission, as the need clearly existed on a continuing basis. The Commission welcomed the extensive work already accomplished by the Working Group and decided that it should be strengthened on a permanent basis and take on an even more comprehensive catalytic and continuous role in coordination of the System. This would involve establishing better working methods and tools for presenting the necessary information to the Working Group and the Commission on the work of the System. It was suggested that the Working Group deal with technical matters and prepare decisions for the Commission so that the Commission could concentrate more on policy issues. More frequent meetings of the Working Group, more contact between the Working Group and the Commission as a whole and more contact between the Working Group with other organizations would facilitate and provide the needed increase in continuity. The Working Group, after consultation with members of the Commission, should also be able to co-opt additional members, when necessary, to maintain wide and full representation and to deal with specific special issues that might arise.

Recommendation 4

15. The Commission welcomed the significant coordination already undertaken by UNSTAT and the international organizations individually and the Subcommittee on Statistical Activities of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), but endorsed the view expressed by the Working Group in paragraph 30 of the report on its fifteenth session (E/CN.3/1993/21) that more could be achieved by the Subcommittee, and that the Subcommittee should find what changes it should introduce to allow it to become more effective. The Commission noted that the subsidiary machinery of ACC, including the Subcommittee, was currently being reviewed. The Commission also noted that the task forces established by the Working Group (see para. 40 below) would report to the Working Group but that, given the important role expected to be played by the task forces both in substance and in coordination, the Subcommittee should consider the work of the task forces and take advantage of it at its meetings.

Recommendation 5

16. The Commission endorsed the Working Group's view that a new structure was not needed for the Global Statistical System, but that approaches were needed that could build on the existing goodwill and enable the existing system to work more effectively. The Commission noted that the UNSTAT work programme included coordination of statistical work and that such a recommendation called on UNSTAT to place more emphasis on coordination and on support for the Commission. Given the range of responsibilities of UNSTAT, it was clear that priorities had to be set. The work done by UNSTAT under the programme was necessary for the promotion of coordination, but not sufficient. The System was characterized as having many centres, without a hierarchical structure and all the organizations involved had to work together. In that coordinating role, UNSTAT was seen as having a primus inter pares status. To support the coordination process, the Working Group had specified a number of instruments or tools to be developed and/or improved. The Working Group and the Commission noted that the arrangements for work on international trade and the revision of

the System of National Accounts (SNA) were good examples of successful approaches. The point was made that some of the coordination mechanisms in force in some national statistical systems might provide some guidance on techniques and mechanisms that might function well at the international level.

Recommendation 6

17. The Commission noted that some work in various fields had already been done by UNSTAT in cooperation with other agencies on assessing implementation and maintaining inventories of standards (see, for example, documents E/CN.3/1993/7 and E/CN.3/1993/15/Add.1, in which work related to economic classifications was reported). Other examples mentioned were the inventory of standards in the Directory of International Statistics and the inventory of classifications in use, the latter prepared by UNSTAT in cooperation with other agencies for the Conference of European Statisticians. In setting up a more complete system in this area, the Commission requested UNSTAT to take account of the following points: (a) a central file/inventory of international standards, classifications should be maintained and countries should be made aware of what was available; (b) in any monitoring it would be useful to know the incidence of standards being applied for national purposes and being applied for communication of data to international organizations; and (c) efforts should be made to find out (i) the extent of national adjustment of standards, (ii) the reasons for non-adherence or slow adoption of standards and (iii) problems in implementation. The Commission recognized that countries needed flexibility in the application of standards to meet their own needs. It was requesting that a monitoring system be set up to provide essential feedback to agencies which would be relevant to the provision of technical cooperation and to future revision of standards.

Recommendation 7

18. The Commission noted that the application of standards in flexible ways at the national level could have an impact on intercountry comparability of data. The point was made that the item might be clarified by referring to "generic methodological standards".

Recommendation 8

19. The Commission stressed the need for continuing efforts to reduce duplication of data collection from countries to supplement successes that had already been achieved. It endorsed joint approaches to data collection. It welcomed the existing tools that had been developed and were in use by the agencies, the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities and the Working Group to reduce duplication and share data. It endorsed the improvements requested by the Working Group, which included an improved classification of subject areas in statistics and the presentation of monitoring tools according to a subject-matter classification. Concern was expressed about different figures being published by different agencies reflecting adjustments made by some agencies.

Recommendation 9

20. The Commission, in its functioning, recognized the autonomous nature of the international agencies with their own governing bodies and recognized that its influence was achieved through moral suasion. Consequently, the term "authoritative advice" was understood as advice that was professional, impartial and informed, and therefore to be taken seriously into account by countries and international organizations in the development of their work programmes. The advice would in part be based on review of integrated work programmes, structured according to a classification of subjects, which would permit the identification of gaps and overlaps. The "allocation of statistical subjects" was not intended to exclude situations in which, in a particular field, one or more organizations might be active, carrying out work on different aspects or issues that were complementary to each other. That would also be made clear through joint work programmes. The Commission noted that reports were available to it at the current session according to an existing classification of subjects and that the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities would consider possible improvements to the classification.

Recommendation 10

21. The Commission considered that the role of the regional statistical conferences and regional statistical divisions was vital to the improved development of the Global Statistical System and its coordination. That System should depend upon and respond to regional influences. The point was made that national statistical services could help strengthen the regional statistical divisions through the provision of training facilities, for example. The Commission noted that in the Secretariat, as part of the restructuring in the economic and social fields, the extent of decentralization away from Headquarters in order to strengthen the role and increase the responsibilities of the regional commissions was being considered. The Secretary-General had indicated the restructuring would also tighten their links with Headquarters. The Commission requested the recommendation to be followed up through all available Secretariat and intergovernmental channels. The recommendation was understood as recognition of the authority and responsibility of the international agencies in their subject-matters at the regional level, and as calling for regional involvement in those subjects, where appropriate. The situation was similar to the relationship between those agencies and UNSTAT at the world level.

Decisions

22. The Commission took note of decisions 1-9 and made some additional comments on decisions 4 and 9, as set out below.

Decision 4

23. The Commission strongly endorsed the establishment of the six task forces by the Working Group and endorsed their terms of reference and the reporting arrangements that had been set up. The Commission urged all agencies to give the utmost priority and effort to the work of the task forces. The Commission took note of the information provided on the intended coverage and methods of work of several of the task forces and decided that additional information on

the progress of the task forces would be provided under the relevant agenda items. The possibility of establishing a task force on service statistics was considered and the Commission asked the Working Group to consider the matter further at its forthcoming session.

Decision 9

24. The Commission was informed of the details of the proposal of UNSTAT that had been endorsed by the Working Group in connection with decision 9; namely to (a) continue to collect, compile and disseminate nationally reported data; (b) supplement the nationally reported data with adjusted national data, where necessary and technically feasible, to make them more compatible with international standards, and prepare estimates for missing data, also where technically feasible, so that the adjusted national data and estimates were seen as complementary to reported data; (c) include in its databases adjusted data and estimates prepared by other international organizations with competence in a particular field, along with full citations and notes to explain the sources and avoid duplication of effort and proliferation of conflicting data; (d) maintain databases of reported data, adjusted data and estimates for missing data, each appropriately identified; and (e) disseminate data to users or provide a system for informing users of the availability and nature of available adjusted and/or estimated data. Such a policy would require that the methodologies for making adjustments and estimates should be methodologically sound and should be described, and that national authorities should be generally aware that international statistical publications might contain adjustments relating to national data for international comparability purposes as well as estimates for missing data. At the same time countries that had not reported data, or whose reported data had been adjusted, could be requested to provide comparable data if available.

25. The Commission took note of a concern expressed by the representative of India on the decision of the Working Group.

Action by the Commission

26. The Commission:

(a) Adopted recommendations 1-10 as set out in paragraphs 27-36 below with comments as set out in paragraphs 11-21 above;

(b) Took note of decisions 1-9 as set out in paragraphs 37-45 below, with comments set out in paragraphs 22-25 above;

(c) Bearing in mind the initiatives taken, as set out above, and as a pragmatic measure to give impetus to such efforts, decided to recommend to the Economic and Social Council that (i) the Commission hold a special session in 1994 of eight half days spread over five days, with a possible consequence that its regular session, scheduled for 1995, could also be reduced to eight half days spread over five days; and (ii) the Working Group meet annually for four days each meeting.

Recommendation 1

27. The Statistical Commission should consider requesting the Economic and Social Council to change the cycle of Commission sessions so that, depending on the need, annual meetings of eight half days spread over five calendar days could be held instead of a single session of eight full days every second year.

Recommendation 2

28. The Commission should decide, with immediate effect:

(a) To nominate officers for the following session at the end of a current session, with formal election at the beginning of the following session, to re-elect the same persons a number of times as officers and to provide for the officers to meet informally;

(b) To request the Secretariat to give a copy of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council to new officers and to consider drafting a popular version of the rules incorporating practical hints;

(c) To request the Statistical Division to invite chairpersons of regional conferences of chief statisticians to participate in the sessions;

(d) To request participants to present their reports to the Commission as documents or background papers and not as lengthy oral statements;

(e) To request the Secretariat to ensure that specific agenda items are well prepared and well documented through discussions and reports of the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities and/or the Working Group.

Recommendation 3

29. The Statistical Commission should decide with immediate effect:

(a) To recommend to the Economic and Social Council that the Working Group should hold one meeting a year, of four days' duration;

(b) To determine the membership of the Working Group at the end of each session of the Commission and give preference to newly nominated officers for the next session;

(c) To request the Statistical Division to invite the chairpersons of the regional conferences of chief statisticians to participate in the meetings of the Working Group;

(d) To request the Working Group to prepare short reports of its meetings and to ensure that the meetings mainly result in specific documentation for the Commission.

Recommendation 4

30. The Statistical Commission should decide with immediate effect:

(a) To request the Statistical Division and the agencies to place more emphasis on coordination matters;

(b) To request the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities to form ad hoc groups for special topics;

(c) To request the ACC Subcommittee to prepare specific documentation on appropriate issues for the Commission, through the Working Group;

(d) To request the ACC Subcommittee to ensure that reports on its meetings provided to the Commission were not lengthy.

Recommendation 5

31. The Commission should request the Statistical Division:

(a) To find ways to strengthen its role in serving the purposes and work of the Commission;

(b) To place more emphasis on coordination matters.

Recommendation 6

32. The Commission should request the Statistical Division, in cooperation with the statistical divisions of the regional commissions and other relevant agencies, to set up a system for monitoring adherence to adopted United Nations classifications, provide a description of the present situation on the adoption of classifications in the member countries and their relationship to adopted United Nations classifications, and submit a progress report to the Commission at its twenty-eighth session.

Recommendation 7

33. The Commission, at its twenty-seventh session should consider the following as a possible special topic for discussion at its twenty-eighth session, in 1995: "Advantages and disadvantages of more flexible standards (classifications and other elements), concentrating in the first instance on classifications for economic activities and commodities (International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities, revision 3; the General Industrial Classification of Economic Activities within the European Communities, revised; and other classifications)".

Recommendation 8

34. The Commission should request the Statistical Division and the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities to give continual attention to reducing duplication in collecting and processing data from member countries, and request a progress report for each session of the Commission, along the lines of chapter I of the inventory of statistical data collection activities (see

E/CN.3/AC.1/1991/R.7): the report (and the inventory) should be reorganized along subject-matter lines.

Recommendation 9

35. The role of the Commission should be to:

(a) Give authoritative advice on the allocation of statistical subjects to the agencies concerning statistical work, development/revision of standards and technical assistance;

(b) Give authoritative advice on the detailed agreements between the agencies on cooperation regarding the actual work to be performed.

Recommendation 10

36. The Statistical Commission should:

(a) Endorse the views of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination related to strengthening the role of the regional statistical divisions and conferences of chief statisticians in the activities of the Statistical Commission and within the global statistical community;

(b) Recommend that regional commissions establish or reinforce conferences of national chief statisticians, technically served by the respective statistical divisions;

(c) Recommend that the regional conferences of chief statisticians, working in close collaboration with the Statistical Commission, act as the focus of regional statistical development. In that role they and the respective regional statistical divisions should be involved in developing, revising, testing and implementing standards and in monitoring their application, as well as in coordinating technical assistance;

(d) Recommend that regional commissions strengthen their statistical divisions to raise the profile of statistical work within each commission's programme of work;

(e) Request specialized agencies, regional development groups and relevant United Nations bodies to cooperate to the fullest extent with the statistical divisions, especially in technical assistance projects;

(f) Request the Statistical Division and the regional commissions, within the context of the Secretary-General's overall restructuring of the United Nations system, to determine the optimal division of effort between Headquarters and the regions.

Decision 1

37. The Working Group decided that, for the 1993 session of the Statistical Commission, the Statistical Division should continue its informal practice of inviting chairpersons of regional conferences to attend Commission sessions.

Decision 2

38. The Working Group requested the Secretariat to develop proposals presenting several options to the Commission on how the Statistical Division might restructure its work programme to respond to these recommendations, including an indication of internal reallocations of resources that might be necessary.

Decision 3

39. The Working Group requested that the Statistical Division and the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities submit inter-agency planning reports on a subject basis, where feasible, to the Commission at its twenty-seventh session.

Decision 4

40. The Working Group identified six subject-matter areas where a need for review was considered a priority. The Working Group noted that task force mechanisms already existed for two of the areas, established new task forces for the other four and, with the agreement of the agencies concerned, appointed conveners for each of the task forces as follows:

1. National accounts (already existing; convener: Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts);

2. Industrial and construction statistics (convener: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development);

3. International trade statistics (already existing; convener: General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade);

4. Finance statistics (convener: International Monetary Fund);

5. Price statistics including the International Comparison Programme (convener: Statistical Office of the European Communities);

6. Environment statistics (convener: Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat).

Decision 5

41. The Working Group requested the task forces established under paragraph 40 above to investigate ways to carry out the evaluations and to carry them out as far as possible.

Decision 6

42. The Working Group requested the task forces established under paragraph 40 to address the question of publications in the course of their review of the particular subject areas. In particular the Working Group requested the task forces to consider the review undertaken by the Conference of European

Statisticians, and set up a similar review. The Working Group specified that this review should primarily concern publications in printed or similar form, but the relationship with machine-readable forms of dissemination should be taken into account. The Working Group considered that it would be in a position to consider the matter further when it had received the task force reports.

Decision 7

43. The Working Group requested the task forces established under paragraph 40 above to carry out, in their particular subject areas, the two tasks described in paragraph 68 (a) and (b) of the report of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination on its fifteenth session (E/CN.3/1993/21).

Decision 8

44. The Working Group decided to bring its concerns relating to technical cooperation again to the attention of the Statistical Commission.

Decision 9

45. The Working Group endorsed the ideas set out in the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/AC.1/1991/R.3/Add.1) concerning the Statistical Division's plans for continuing to collect, compile and disseminate nationally reported data and to extend its adjustment and estimation work to all fields in its responsibility as far as possible, in order to meet the wide range of user needs. The Working Group decided that these plans should be brought to the attention of the specialized agencies for their consideration.

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STATISTICAL COMMISSION
Twenty-seventh session
22 February-3 March 1993
Agenda item 4 (a)

NATIONAL ACCOUNTS AND BALANCES: SYSTEM OF NATIONAL ACCOUNTS (SNA)

Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, Poland and Zambia: draft resolution

System of National Accounts, 1993

The Economic and Social Council,

Recognizing that the System of National Accounts, 1993, updates, clarifies and simplifies the previous SNA and harmonizes it more completely with other sets of international standards in statistics,

Affirming that the 1993 SNA is a conceptual and accounting framework that is applicable to all countries,

Recognizing also that the 1993 SNA emphasizes flexibility, thus acknowledging the need to encourage its use in economies that differ widely and to facilitate international comparisons,

Noting that the 1993 SNA completes the integration of balance sheets, thus providing a fuller picture of the resources at an economy's disposal, consolidates hitherto separate presentations of important elements of an economy and lays the groundwork for dealing with interaction between the economy and the environment, and elaborates an analytical approach to the assessment of poverty through the Social Accounting Matrices,

1. Expresses its deep appreciation to the member organizations of the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on National Accounts (the Statistical Division of the United Nations, the regional commissions of the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and

Development, the Statistical Office of the European Communities and the World Bank), non-governmental organizations, a number of member States, and many individual experts in national accounting for their contributions in the form of human and financial resources, to the development of the 1993 SNA, over a period of more than 10 years;

2. Recommends that member States consider using the 1993 SNA as the international standard for the compilation of their national accounts statistics, as an analytical tool, and to promote the integration of economic and related statistics at the national and international levels;

3. Recommends that member States use the 1993 SNA in the international reporting of comparable national accounting data;

4. Requests the Secretary-General and the members of the Inter-Secretariat Working Group of National Accounts to proceed with publication of the 1993 SNA in all six languages of the United Nations as rapidly as possible and to promote its wide dissemination;

5. Also requests member States and regional and international organizations to support all aspects of the implementation of the SNA - namely, basic data development; the issuance of handbooks, guidelines, manuals and special studies; training activities among both users and producers; and technical cooperation activities;

6. Further requests member States and regional international organizations to assist in support of further developmental work on methodologies identified in the research agenda;

7. Urges the Secretary-General to coordinate at a high level the mobilization of bilateral and multilateral resources for the implementation of the 1993 SNA.

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STATISTICAL COMMISSION
Twenty-seventh session
22 February-3 March 1993
Agenda item 14

COORDINATION AND INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL PROGRAMMES

Canada*: draft resolution

Special session of the United Nations Statistical Commission

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling that the Statistical Commission has completed a fundamental review of the structure and operation of the international statistical system and, as a result, has made recommendations for strengthening the international statistical system through the following:

(a) A more active Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination to monitor progress in coordination/cooperation within the international statistical system between sessions of the Statistical Commission;

(b) Strengthened United Nations regional commissions and their statistical divisions in terms of their responsibilities for statistical development in their regions;

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* In accordance with rule 69 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council.

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(c) Establishment of six task forces as mechanisms for developing a more integrated work programme among international organizations in the following subject-matter areas: national accounts; industrial and construction statistics; international trade statistics; finance statistics; price statistics; and environment statistics;

Requests that there be a special session of the Commission in 1994 of four to five days' duration for the purpose of reviewing progress being made in the implementation of the recommendations for strengthening the international statistical system.